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## AMOR CADUCO: LOVE, AGING, AND WOMEN WRITERS IN THE SPANISH ENLIGHTENMENT

### RESUMEN

Mientras que los debates sobre el tema de la mujer fueron comunes entre los intelectuales del siglo XVIII español—hombres y mujeres—la imagen que dominaba era la de la mujer joven y bonita. Este ensayo examina la imagen de la mujer vieja, comparando representaciones elaboradas por algunos de los hombres ilustrados más importantes (Nicolás y Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Félix Samaniego y Francisco de Goya) con algunos textos escritos por sus colegas contemporáneas Inés Joyes y Blake, María del Rosario Cepeda, María Rosa Gálvez, Margarita Hickey y Pellizoni y María Gertrudis Hore.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Ilustración—mujeres—Nicolás Fernández de Moratín—Leandro Fernández de Moratín—Félix Samaniego—Francisco de Goya—Inés Joyes y Blake—María del Rosario Cepeda—María Rosa Gálvez—Margarita Hickey y Pellizoni—María Gertrudis Hore—Junta de Damas

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## ABSTRACT

While debates about the topic of women were common among intellectuals of the eighteenth century in Spain —men and women— the image that dominated was that of the young and beautiful woman. This essay examines the image of the aging woman, as compared to representations by some of the most important Enlightenment men (Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Félix Samaniego, and Francisco de Goya) to texts written by their female contemporaries Inés Joyes y Blake, María del Rosario Cepeda, María Rosa Gálvez, Margarita Hickey y Pellizoni, and María Gertrudis Hore

**KEYWORDS:** Enlightenment—women—Nicolás Fernández de Moratín—Leandro Fernández de Moratín—Félix Samaniego—Francisco de Goya—Inés Joyes y Blake—María del Rosario Cepeda—María Rosa Gálvez—Margarita Hickey y Pellizoni—María Gertrudis Hore—Junta de Damas

## I. INTRODUCTION

The 1762 comedy *La petimetra* by neoclassical dramatist Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, is the story of a narcissistic fashion-obsessed woman, Jerónima. Toward the end of the play's first act, the central character scandalously allows two suitors in her dressing room. As she observes herself in a mirror, she asks the male on-lookers their opinion of her hairstyle, to which one of them responds affirmingly: "Estás, Jerónima bella, transformada en una Venus". Jerónima represented one of two female character types commonly depicted in eighteenth-century Spanish art and literature: the fashionable French-influenced *petimetra* and the sexy working class Castilian *maja*. Both *petimetra* and *maja* types were known for their appearance and their free-spirited behavior, from which they derived both pleasure and power. Both types also exhibited *marcialidad*, a term that referred to women's dress and behavior. In the words of Janis Tomlinson, *marcialidad* was a "new visibility of women...accompanied by a new mode of behavior", which Tomlinson finds reflected in many of Goya's tapestry cartoons, portraits and engravings ("Mothers, *Majas*, and *Marcialidad*" 219). Throughout the eighteenth century, women's abilities and right place in a changing society had been passionately discussed, beginning with Benito Feijoo's essay "Defensa de las mujeres" published in the first volume of this *Teatro crítico universal* (1726) and continuing through numerous debates carried out by men and women on the printed page, in assembly halls, and on stage.<sup>2</sup> The open and free behavior associated with these *petimetras* and *majas*

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<sup>2</sup> The bibliography on women in eighteenth-century Spain is extensive. See especially Kitts *The Debate on the Nature, Role, and Influence of Women in Eighteenth-Century Spain*; Bolufer *Mujeres e ilustración*; Jaffe and Lewis *Eve's Enlightenment: Women's Experience in Spain and Spanish America 1727-1839*, and "Iberian Feminism in the Age of Enlightenment" in the collection *Iberian Feminisms* (2018).

certainly sparked male desire, but it also invited male criticism by intellectuals like Nicolás Fernández de Moratín: the former for her obsession with luxury goods and foreign (mostly French) influenced fashion, and the latter, although a nationalistic foil to the frenchified *petimetra*, scrutinized for her overt sexuality and “brash nature” (Zanardi 109-110).<sup>3</sup> In the case of *majas*, Zanardi finds that their representations in eighteenth-century Spanish art and literature point to “anxieties about femininity and to the significant debates about the nature and role of women in eighteenth-century Spain” (112).



Figure 1: Colección de trajes de España, Juan de la Cruz Cano y Holmedilla, 1777.  
Biblioteca Nacional de España

Some eighteenth-century Spanish texts presented an alternative image of idealized femininity that stood in contrast to the scandalous *majas* and *petimetras*. The heroine of Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s (son of the aforementioned Nicolás) 1806 box-office hit *El sí de las niñas* represented what the men of the Spanish Enlightenment thought they wanted in a mate. Early in the comedy, the aging 59-year-old don Diego sings the praises of his 16-year-old love interest Paquita: “Es muy linda, muy graciosa, muy humilde... Y sobre todo, ¡aquel candor, aquella inocencia! Vamos, es de lo que no se encuentra por ahí... Y talento.. Sí señor,

<sup>3</sup> See also Rebecca Haidt, *Women, work, and clothing in eighteenth-century Spain* for an analysis of these two types, the *maja* and the *petimetra*, especially as presented in on the popular stage in the *sainetes* and *tonadillas* of the period.

mucho talento" (168). Beauty, grace, humbleness, candor, innocence, and talent were the ideal qualities that *los ilustrados* said they wanted from their women, even when the abundance of more scandalous and enticing images of young women indicated otherwise. Of course don Diego finds out at the end of this play that his idealized notions were illusions, founded on "castillos en el aire" (283). But whether erotic or innocent, scandalous or respectable, it seemed that the women whom eighteenth-century men wanted were beautiful, and young. But what of older women? How were older eighteenth-century women portrayed and what did women themselves have to say about aging? In the following pages I will examine the question of women, love, and aging in the Spanish eighteenth century, first as represented by men from Leandro Fernández de Moratín to Félix Samaniego and Francisco Goya, and then in texts by women themselves: Inés Joyes' essay "Apología de las mujeres" (1798), a speech delivered by a member of Spain's first women's civic organization the *Junta de Damas*, María del Rosario Cepeda, the comedy "Familia a la moda" (1805) by María Rosa Gálvez, "Romance a una fea" (1789) by Margarita Hickey, and the poem "Amor caduco" (1796) by María Gertrudis Hore. Older women, as presented in male-created works, were ridiculed as undesirable, and their influence on younger women depicted as dangerous to society. However, female artists present women as more than the passive objects of male desire whose worth fades with time: they also show both younger and older women as thinking and feeling subjects who claimed their own value throughout the stages of their lives.

## 2. AGING IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

During the Enlightenment in Spain, as in other European countries, we find changing attitudes about aging for men and women. David Troyansky identifies a shift in eighteenth-century French literature from the ridiculed images of aging found in the character type of the *viellard amoureux* toward alternative depictions of wise and virtuous family men —*viellard amoureux et raisonnnable* (51-54)—. Writer Claire Josèphe Hippolyte Legris Clairon (1723-1803) offered in her *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon* the perspective of an old woman negotiating the cultural and physiological effects of aging in eighteenth-century France:

The sagging of my body does not yet influence my spirit and head; I have all the sensitivity, all the activity of my first age. My taste for reading has happily grown; it is useful to me to surround myself daily with the great characters of all times and all places; I learn with them to compare, to reflect to bear the void and the pains of life, to prove to myself that it is necessary that everything passes and becomes as nothing. (Quoted in Troyansky 63)

For women, the aging process was fraught with "the eighteenth-century fixation with a youthful physical ideal" such that "many old women, even those of the intellectual elite, experienced their old age as a time of personal loss" (Ottaway 14). While both old men and old women could be objects of social ridicule when they failed to "act their age," rarely were

old women afforded the opportunity for social redemption as were men. In fact, before the eighteenth century, few older women appeared as major characters in Spanish literature or art, with the very notable exception of the iconic *Celestina* of Fernando de Roja's 1499 *tragicomedia*, whose complex character dominated the Spanish imagination well into the eighteenth century and beyond.<sup>4</sup> John Dowling credits neoclassical playwright Leandro Fernández de Moratín with writing older women characters into the eighteenth-century stage throughout his career, beginning with *El viejo y la niña* (1790) and continuing through his last and most successful comedy, *El sí de las niñas* (1806). Moratín's numerous older female characters —found in both minor and major roles— “made a radical change in the Spanish theatre by creating an attractive comic role for the older actress”, a change that continued to influence the Spanish stage into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Dowling 55). Still, despite their increased presence and importance on the Spanish stage, even Moratín's older female characters were not presented as kindly as their aging male counterparts. In *El sí de las niñas* don Diego dreams of marrying a young “mujer aprovechada, hacendosa, que sepa cuidar de la casa, economizar, estar en todo” (169). He contrasts this idealized young wife of his dreams to the annoyance having to live with aging housekeepers, whom he describes as “regalonas, entrometidas, habladoras, llenas de histérico, viejas, feas como demonios” (170). Paquita's annoying mother, Irene —to whom Diego refers as “muy vanidosa y muy remilgada, y hablando siempre de su parentela y de sus difuntos” (169)<sup>5</sup>—, serves as the comical counterpoint to don Diego's reasonable and measured behavior. Philip Deacon points to one exchange where Irene speaks of her three marriages and 22 children “*hasta ahora*”: “Las palabras ‘hasta ahora’ desatan una reacción cómica bastante fuerte por insinuar que ella no descarta la posibilidad de volver a casarse” (152). In the happy ending of the play, Moratín “resiste la tentación de casar a doña Irene con don Diego, un final propio de la comedia tradicional que Moratín rechazaría como inverosímil” (Deacon 157).<sup>6</sup> While Irene's character remains overly coquettish and laughable to the end, describing her daughter's young suiter as “un mozo muy galán... Morenillo, pero tiene un mirar de ojos muy hechicero” (283), Don Diego redeems himself from his folly, his “cabeza de ilusiones” (283). This of course he blames on the older women of the play (Paquita's aunts and her mother Irene) whose influence almost caused a life of unhappiness for the young Paquita and for him. Diego facilitates the more

<sup>4</sup> *La Celestina* has been an iconic representation of old women both in and outside of Spain. In her study on aging in men and women, *The Coming of Age* (1970), feminist and existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir speaks of the *Celestina* character: “in her are summed up all the vices that had been attributed to old women since classical times, and in spite of her shrewdness she ends up by being severely punished” (148).

<sup>5</sup> See Note 9 in the Dowling/Andioc edition. These words from the 1805-1806 editions were cut from the 1825 edition.

<sup>6</sup> Sally-Ann Kitts (2009) indicates contradictions in Diego's supposedly reasoned behavior, contradictions that point to complex power relationships according to gender and age.

suitable marriage between young Paquita and Diego's nephew Carlos and declaring himself as Paquita's "nuevo padre" (284).

Harsh ridicule of women who fail to recognize their fading youth and beauty abounds in Spanish literature and art of the eighteenth century. In Félix Samaniego's *fábula* "La Hermosa y el espejo" (1784), a woman is infuriated to find that with the passing of the years, her faithful "friend" the mirror no longer praises her beauty with words of "*gracioso*" or "*bonito*" but rather tells her the plain, hard truth of her aging. The poet scolds the female subject of the poem:

Escúchame, Anarda:  
«Si buscas amigos  
que te representen  
tus gracias y hechizos,  
mas que no te adviertan  
defectos y aun vicios,  
de aquellos que nadie  
conoce en sí mismo,  
dime, ¿de qué modo  
podrás corregirlos?» (35-44)

This fable is at once a rebuke of aging female narcissism and a call for moral self-examination and self-improvement. Irene Gómez Castellano, Michael Schlig and Álvaro Molina have discussed male-created literary and visual images of eighteenth-century Spanish women and women's beauty, and in particular the use of the mirror as metaphor. Gómez Castellano, in her analysis of the use of the mirror in rococo poems by Meléndez Valdés and Cadalso, finds in the highly embellished and eroticized descriptions of young female beauty reflected in the dressing room mirror a "metáfora del producto artístico y la mujer como alegórica del artista rococó" (93).<sup>7</sup> For Schlig, mirrors underscore "inaccuracy, fallibility, and deceit, but in the same contexts they often also exposed unresolved issues related to relations between the sexes" (Schlig, "(D)espejos" 378). Schlig goes on to cite Laura Mulvey's important 1975 essay that established the concept of the male gaze as fundamental not only to film studies, but for any analysis of images —visual or literary— of women's bodies. Álvaro Molina, in his study of the visual representations of gender in eighteenth-century Spain, also examines the presence of mirrors and of male on-lookers in the depictions of the aging female body "En las imágenes que giran en torno al espacio del tocador, la verdad del espejo se opone fre-

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<sup>7</sup> Irene Gómez Castellano contrasts these rococó images to satirical depictions of mirrors and women by Francisco Goya, which are more in the vein of seventeenth-century poet Francisco de Quevedo and his baroque sensibility of *desengaño* found in the reflection of the mirror.

cuentemente a la de los aduladores que acompañan a la dama en su arreglo personal, sobre todo con el paso de los años” (396).

The exterior male gaze of patriarchy fetishizes the female form while at the same time it censures a woman's own narcissistic gaze into the mirror. Freud himself voices the same ambivalence that Enlightenment men held towards (young) female beauty:

Women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed upon them in their choice of object. Strictly speaking, it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of man's love for them [...] Such women have the greatest fascination for men, not only for aesthetic reasons, since as a rule they are the most beautiful, but also [...] it seems very evident that another person's narcissism has a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own narcissism and are in search of object-love. (“On Narcissism” 87-88)

Spanish historian Mónica Bolufer points out that eighteenth-century Spanish women derived personal pleasure and social power from their appearance, and they enjoyed for themselves “el secreto placer de la contemplación narcicista, gustar y gustarse, seducir y verse en el espejo de la mirada de otros, provocando el deseo masculino y la envidia de su sexo” (208). Yet eighteenth-century Spanish women were frequently warned that their youth and their beauty would be short-lived, as Samaniego's fable declares, and a number of satirical visual images of the period suggest.



Figure 2: Francisco de Goya *Majas en el balcón* (Metropolitan Museum of Art);

Figure 3: *Maja y Celestina en el balcón* (Bartolomé March Collection);

Figure 4: *Las viejas* (Palais de Beaux Arts, Lille)



The paintings *Majas on a Balcony*, *Maja and Celestina on a Balcony*, and *Time and the Old Ladies* (figures 2, 3, and 4) by Francisco de Goya, all created between 1808-1812 and believed to be intended as a series,<sup>8</sup> highlight through the presence of mirrors and external observers some themes related to the patriarchal gaze of young and old female bodies. Tara Zanardi discusses the composition of the first two paintings in which the balcony railings separate the young *majas* from the viewer, placing them on display, while the shadowy *majos* and old *Celestina*-like women in the backgrounds suggest danger, prostitution, but also “an increased expression of female agency” (139). They also, through their use of aging female bodies that are sometimes juxtaposed with young female bodies, point to the fleeting nature of female beauty and ridicule the delusional female self. Goya had explored these themes earlier, from the subtle irony of his various portraits of the Queen María Luisa, to the young *majas* and decrepit old women of the *Caprichos* (1799)—for example in No. 3 *Ruega por ella* and 55 *Hasta la muerte* (Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 5: Francisco de Goya *Ruega por ella* (Museo del Prado);  
Figure 6: Francisco de Goya, *Hasta la muerte* (Museo del Prado)

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion of these paintings in the catalog of the Fundación Goya en Aragón. <http://fundaciongoya-aragon.es>.



Of the engraving “Hasta la muerte,” Gómez Castellano states that unlike aging female subjects in the baroque poetry of Quevedo, “Goya no permite a la protagonista del Capricho 55 el lujo de una anagnórisis trágica.” Not only is the subject of “Hasta la muerte” old, she is ignorant of the very fact that she is old (81). Younger male and female observers in the scene serve to reveal the truth of the old woman’s delusion: she is an object of ridicule, a mere caricature of a beautiful young woman. Her self-indulging narcissistic gaze contrasts with the harsh scrutiny of the mirror, questioning her interior sense of self—does she see what the others see in the mirror, a delusion, or something else? Mulvey critiques the typical patriarchal depiction of woman, who is “tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning” (834). In this conception of femininity, not only is woman silenced, incapable of being the maker of her own meaning, as she ages she is rendered irrelevant. Speaking of Freud’s declaration of “psychical rigidity and unchangeability” in women after thirty (Freud, “Femininity” 134-135), Toril Moi exclaims that for him, older women are “the living dead, the Nosferatus of the soul. No wonder Freud finds them frightening” (842).

Of course, women, even eighteenth-century Spanish women, have not been silent or silenced, especially not after age thirty. Many Spanish Enlightenment women writers achieved literary success through publication in their 30s and beyond —playwright María Rosa Gálvez and poet Margarita Hickey were in their 30s, essayist Josefa Amar y Borbón in her 40s, María Gertrudis Hore in her 50s, while Inés Joyes y Blake was in her 60s—. These women had quite a lot to say about women’s right place in society, their own agency, their relationship to other women, and even about their own desire.

### 3. EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH WOMEN WRITERS AND AGING

Some older women writers emphasized their roles as motherly advocates for younger women. In 1798 Inés Joyes y Blake, a 67-year-old widow, published an “Apología de las mujeres” addressed to her daughters and published in an epilogue to her translation of Samuel Johnson’s novel *Rasselas*. Joyes begins her *Apología* by criticizing the contradictions and injustices women suffer in a patriarchal society: “somos queridas, aborrecidas, alabadas, vituperadas, celebradas, respetadas, despreciadas, y censuradas” (177). She complains that young girls are taught that they are valuable only for their looks, not their brains: “Llega a un pueblo una forestera y oye que la primera que se pregunta es si es bonita, si es petimetra, pero nunca si es entendida, si es juiciosa” (184). Joyes sees an important role for herself as mother and mentor to her own daughters, but also to all women:

Yo quisiera desde lo alto de un monte donde fuera posible que me oyesen todas darles un consejo. Oid mujeres, les diría, no os apoqueis: vuestras almas son iguales a las del sexo que os quiere tiranizar: usad de las luces que el Criador os dio: a vosotras, si quereis, se podrá deber la reforma de las costumbres, que sin vosotras nunca llegará: respetáos a vosotras mismas y os respetarán:

amaos unas a otras: conoced que vuestro verdadero mérito no consiste en una cara bonita, ni en gracias exteriores siempre poco durables, y que los hombres luego que ven que os desvanecéis con sus alabanzas os tienen ya por suyas: manifestadles que sois amantes de vuestro sexo. (203-204)

Instead of criticizing women's delusional self-centered narcissism, Inés Joyes encourages women's self-worth. She tells them not to belittle themselves ("no os apoqueis"), but to see themselves as equal to men ("vuestras almas son iguales"), and that their value is more than a "cara bonita." Men, says Joyes, are not to be trusted. She uses words like "tiranizar" and warns of their false praise meant to trap them ("con sus alabanzas os tienen ya por suyas"). She also uses the language of love to encourage female agency: that women should love each other ("amaos unas a otras") and that they be lovers, not of men, but of their own sex ("amantes de vuestro sexo"). Instead of the introspection of the mirror, the 67-year-old Joyes concludes her open letter to her daughters with an image of herself figuratively shouting from the mountaintop to all Spanish women, which she did with the publication of this *Apología*.

Motherly advocacy for younger women and girls was the focus of the activities and publications of the aristocratic women of the *Junta de Damas de Mérito y Honor*, a sister organization of the all-male Economic Society of Madrid founded in 1787 and Spain's first women's civic organization.<sup>9</sup> Among their philanthropic and charitable work with the poor women and children of Madrid, was their support of the *Escuelas patrióticas*, where working-class girls learned trades in the textile industry. A 1797 painting of Francisca María Dávila Carrillo de Albornoz, the Countess of Truillas, who was president of the organization from 1790 to 1801, pays tribute not only to their leader, but also to the work of the *Junta*. The painting by prominent portrait artist Agustín Esteve, shows the 63-year-old Truillas congratulating a young pupil, who is showing the countess her prize-winning embroidery (Martín Valdepeñas Yagüe). The countess gestures to what might appear to be a mirror, but is rather the shield of the Royal Economic Society blazoned with its motto *Socorre enseñando*, thus rejecting narcissism and its focus on female beauty and reflecting instead to the girl a higher ideal in the importance of education. Another member of the *Junta de Damas*, María Cepeda, in a speech delivered to the Royal Economic Society of Madrid in 1797, the same year that the portrait was completed, explained the personal and social impact that education in the *Escuelas patrióticas* had on the future of young girls like the one in the Esteve painting:

Aquellas jóvenes con la educación que han recibido se estiman más a sí mismas, no se acomodan a colocarse en matrimonio sin muchos miramientos, y cálculos de conveniencia doméstica, de

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the founding and the activities of the *Junta de Damas*, see Bolufer (1998) and Capel (2006).



Figure 7: *Augustín Esteve y Marqués, Francisca María Dávila Carrillo de Albornoz, Condesa de Truillas, Presidenta de la Junta de Damas de Honor y Mérito. 1797.* (Junta de Damas). Photo by Ana María Fernández Piquer

que prescindirían en el estado de inútiles, y abandonadas; sus maridos se ven obligados a tratarlas con mayor estimación; sus hijos participarán por necesidad de la educación que ellas recibieron; y en suma aquellas mismas mujeres, que estaban en el riesgo de incurrir en la mendicidad, o en el desorden, nos vemos precisados a considerarlas como uno de los apoyos mayores de la felicidad pública. (14)

With education, believed the ladies of the *Junta de Damas* like Truillas and Cepeda, young girls could learn to value themselves: “se estiman más a sí mismas.” Instead of being condemned to a poor marriage, of being “inútiles,” or “abandonadas,” these girls will not only improve themselves, but will also pass on the education they receive to their children.

Without education, working class girls were at risk of “mendicidad” or worse, “desorden,” of economic and moral ruin for themselves and for Spain. With education, these girls not only improve their own lives, but they also are the basis of “felicidad pública.”

An older woman’s advocacy for young women is also the premise of the comedy *Familia a la moda* by María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera, an unpublished play that was represented on the official Madrid stage, first in the Caños theater in 1805, and later in the Príncipe in 1807 (Bordiga Grinstein 104). Helena Establier has studied what she calls a “dramaturgia feminista” in the plays of María Rosa Gálvez that promoted public happiness through the individual happiness of women:

Parece evidente que María Rosa Gálvez traza en sus comedias unos personajes femeninos que, sin complejidad psicológica ninguna, consiguen poner su inteligencia y su buen sentido al servicio de la felicidad propia y, por ende, de la general. Es el hecho de que las mujeres se conviertan en exponentes de la razón, y no sólo en modelos de virtud y sumisión, el que se perfila como novedad dentro del modelo de la comedia ilustrada, ceñida por lo general al concepto masculino de autoridad y poco proclive a ir más allá de la «escuela de esposas» (Kish) para mostrar personajes femeninos inteligentes y sensatos. (191)

David Gies, comparing *Familia a la moda* to plays by later nineteenth-century male authors from Zorilla to Gil y Zárate, finds that “Gálvez anticipates many important themes of late nineteenth-century Spain: the superficiality of the middle class, economic anxiety and obsession with money, the issue of gambling, and the role of women in a society structured and controlled mostly by men” (152).

In this play, a grouchy rich widow Guiomar arrives in Madrid from the countryside to straighten out her gambling brother and neglectful *petimetra* sister-in-law, to save her nephew from idleness and vice, and finally to save her young niece Inés from the fate of either a bad marriage or a life in the convent. Inés’s mother, Madama de Pimpleas, is flattered by the fiancé she has picked for her daughter, the Marqués de Altopunto, who acts as her (the mother’s) *cortejo*.<sup>10</sup> While Madama de Pimpleas describes herself as a *petimetra fina* (Act I, scene XI), Guiomar, the old country aunt, is described by various characters as “vieja,” “anciana,” “mal vestida,” and “fea como un vestigio.” Guiomar herself complains of her aging body, especially of some rather comic digestive issues and flatulence problems

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<sup>10</sup> The highly criticized practice of the *cortejo*, in which a married woman took on a male suitor who was not her husband to accompany her socially, was the subject of Carmen Martín Gaité’s study *Usos amorosos del dieciocho en España* (1972).

caused by the unusual eating habits at her brother's home. But when her sister-in-law is unwilling to allow the young Inés to marry for love, Guiomar threatens to re-marry herself, thus jeopardizing the inheritance they were hoping for their son and themselves. While Madama de Pimpleas is incredulous at Guiomar's threat "¡Casarse en su edad!" (Act II, scene XI), her riches certainly attract one man, the womanizing singing instructor, Trapachino, who once called Guiomar "una vieja asquerosa" (Act II, Scene I), but later wonders if her grumpiness might conceal a "una pasión cariñosa" for him (Act II, scene XIII). In the end, Guiomar corrects the misbehavior of her brother, sister-in-law, and nephew. She also paves the way for a happy marriage and future for her niece by promising her inheritance to Inés. Guiomar is also the one who pronounces the play's closing words, and its moral: "que a nadie acomoda / imitar en sus sandeces / todas las ridiculeces / de una familia a la moda" (Act III, scene XII). Yet despite being ideologically in line with the typical Enlightenment "comedia de costumbres contemporáneas" (Andioc 62), which promoted rational action and social order, this play was initially prohibited by the censors. Establier speculates that this might have been because Gálvez's comedy presented a new, more dissident, image of femininity that made woman "salv guarda, ya no moral sino racional, del orden social" (192). Guiomar, as her name suggests, serves as a wise guide, a "guía" who leads this fashionable family from folly and wastefulness to responsibility and usefulness. She also serves as guide and guardian of the young Inés, filling the maternal role that Madama de Pimpleas does not.

To be called ugly and old does not seem to worry or deter the character Guiomar, and yet these monikers were frequently used by eighteenth-century men and women to belittle and to silence. Margarita Hickey addresses this problem in a poem titled "Romance a una fea que, envidiosa de los aplausos de hermosa que lograba otra dama de alguna más edad que ella, por disminuérseles e injuriarla, la llamaba vieja", published in her collection *Poesías varias sagradas, morales y profanas o amorosas: con dos poemas épicos* (1789).<sup>11</sup> María Salgado finds that the main themes of her poems unmask the "traps of love" and finds that together "they can be used as a guide to woman's behavior and to man-woman relationships" (81). In this particular poem, the female poetic voice begins by scolding a young woman harshly for her treatment of an older, yet more beautiful woman. She calls the young *fea*, who is named Anarda (the same as the narcissistic woman of Samaniego's fable), "engañada" and "necia" for her cruel insult to the aging but still beautiful rival Belisa. The poetic voice harshly questions Anarda: "¿Sabes que entre los males / con que las furias leteas / pueden afligir al mundo / no le hay mayor que el ser fea?" (21-24). The poem seems to be on Belisa's side, defending her beauty, despite her

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<sup>11</sup> This collection also included Hickey's translation of Racine's tragedy *Andromaque* and a poem dedicated to Captain Pedro Cevallos, Viceroy of the Río de la Plata 1777-1778. A second volume that was never published promised more translated drama and a second epic poem. See Sullivan (1997) and Salgado (2009).

age: “La anciana que ha sido hermosa / aunque ya no lo parezca [...] siempre algunos bellos restos / logra de aquellas riquezas” while an ugly girl like Anarda has no hope: “la que después y antes / ha sido, es, y será fea / siempre a los ojos de todos / será, ha sido y es molesta.” (25-36). For 104 of the 184 verses of this *romance*, the female poetic voice seems to defend *la vieja* at the expense of the *fea*. However, in line 105, she suggests a different focus for Anarda:

Ya que a los timbres de hermosa  
no puedes llegar, y es fuerza  
conformarte con tu suerte,  
aspira a los de discreta;  
que además de ser más nobles,  
más dignas de honra y de excelsas  
alabanzas, puedes sola  
erigírtelos tú mesma. (105-112)

While a woman cannot change her undesirable social status as *fea*, to be *discreta* —modest, prudent, moderate— is an accolade Anarda can obtain for herself. Heaven may have denied her beauty, but it has given Anarda other gifts: “otros dones / te ha dotado en recompensa” (127-128). Suddenly the poem criticizes the woman whose beauty makes her overly proud and arrogant, desirous of applause that “las más veces / son causa de su miseria” (131-132). The poem praises the ugly woman for her intelligence as “entendida,” “sagaz” and “discreta,” while beautiful women are now described as the “necias” and doomed to disgrace. In the end, neither the *fea* nor the *vieja* triumphs, rather, each woman is urged to accept providence and their imperfect destinies. Nonetheless, behind Hickey’s reproach to young Anarda for her treatment of the aging Belisa is a validation of women, no matter the circumstances of their lives—young or old, beautiful or ugly. Instead of seeing each other enviously, as competitors for the attentions of men, Hickey’s poetry encourages women to look within for their individual value, and to accept each other.

The aging female poetic subject’s sense of self and feeling of love and even desire is the focus of the poem “Amor caduco,” by María Gertrudis Hore, who was 54 at the time of its publication in the *Diario de Madrid* in April of 1796. Also known by her penname *Hija del Sol*, Hore (1742-1801) is the author of fourteen published poems, most of which appeared in journals in Madrid after she became a nun in the late 1780s through the 1790s.<sup>12</sup> “Amor caduco”

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<sup>12</sup> Frédérique Morand has published extensively about Hore, her life and her work. See especially her two books in the bibliography of this study. Morand reproduces the poem “Amor caduco” in *Una poetisa en busca de libertad* (2007), pp. 211-214.



provides what on the surface seems to be a lighthearted but cautionary tale to old women who still dream of love. In the poem, the love-stricken old Cefisa stumbles and injures herself while daydreaming of a former lover, but she comes back to reality from her delusion after glimpsing her reflection in a stream: “con rostro arrugado / cabello nevado / de amor padecer?” (67-69) the poet inquires. Images of the poetic subject’s advanced age exist for the viewer/reader long before this climactic moment. From the poem’s first images—her cane, her neck hunched over with age, and her trembling vision—to its description of the fateful fall from her “anciana débil planta” (57) resulting in her grave injury as she feels her face literally bathed in blood, we observe with pity, and perhaps we even laugh at her moment of self-recognition as an ironic twist on the myth of Narcissus in which her own reflection in the stream does not captivate, but rather repulses. Still, the destiny of both Narcissus and Hore’s poetic Cefisa is death, graphically depicted in Cefisa’s bloody head injury, but also looming as she walks away slowly into the sunset towards home. Death first appears lines before Cefisa’s fall, in the memory of her dead lover. The use of the word “caduco” in title of the poem evokes not merely old age, but also decrepitude and obsolescence. Cefisa’s youth, her former beauty, and her love life have passed, and outwardly they are barely discernable, the carved words from a long-lost lover “casi borrados” (14) in the bark of an old tree. Yet, for Cefisa the memories that these barely visible words evoke are inerasable, and they bring back a pain so strong that she believes she would die from love, not from old age —“muriera de amor, / sí, de amor moriría” (48-49)— the hypothetical imperfect subjunctive and conditional tenses connect past to present, while they evoke an inner experience that cannot be observed. The climactic moment of self-recognition as she views her bloody reflection in the stream shows that she is not like the decrepit old ladies of Goya’s pieces who persist in their delusional self-image, yet neither is her realization mere acceptance of lost youth and beauty. Cefisa recognizes that she, as her lover had done before her, is dying.

In the poem’s sensible conclusion, Cefisa seems to reject her former youthful passions: “entregando al olvido / de su pasada juventud pasiones” (81-82). She leaves the idyllic outdoor scene of her youth—the green meadow, the flowery field, the tall oak, and of course the stream running through it—and she returns to her cabin, a domestic setting, more fitting of an old grandmother, and to her loving “familia placentera” (87). It seems that Cefisa has learned her lesson, that she will not persist in her delusion “hasta la muerte” as Goya warns. In the end, Cefisa is thankful, but not that she has learned something important about aging and love. Rather, she gives thanks to Heaven that no one saw her swoon and fall, “que no hubo en el suelo quien viera su acción” (92-93). The poet interjects her own advice to old women at the end of the poem, turning this poem into a female-authored fable that, similar to Hickey’s poem to her ugly Anarda, stands in contrast to Samaniego’s prior admonitions to aging beauties. Hore’s advice is not that old women forget the past and deny their feelings, but rather, curiously, that if they do harbor lingering emotions of love, they should stop

walking for a while: “suspendan luego el paso” (103) and avoid public humiliation. Hore both acknowledges the power of the male gaze in the possibility of public ridicule and humiliation, while she also affirms the importance of women’s inner emotional life.

Simone de Beauvoir elaborates on the disconnect between the way an aging woman feels, and the way she is seen by society. Speaking of studies of older women’s sexuality, de Beauvoir asserts that “women go on feeling desire long after they have stopped being attractive to men” (*The Coming of Age* 348). In her earlier feminist study *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir describes the aging woman in contemporary society as frustrated and negative “she shuts herself up with the secret she carries in her heart that is the mysterious key to her unhappy lot” (642). De Beauvoir is unique among twentieth-century feminists in her interest in aging, and still her words reflect how negatively society viewed an old woman’s love. While many through the centuries seemed to agree with Freud that a woman past thirty was of little interest or, worse, even dangerous for society, we have seen how some eighteenth-century Spanish women were just coming into their own as they aged. Women like Ines Joyes and the members of the *Junta de Damas* used their experience to influence and advocate for younger women. They encouraged women to love themselves, and to show men that they can be in Inés Joyes y Blake’s words, “lovers of their own sex” (204). In female-authored literary pieces like “Familia a la moda,” “Romance a una fea,” and “Amor caduco,” not only does an older woman avoid becoming a caricaturesque object of ridicule, but she also moves from object —bearer of other’s meaning— to subject, her own maker of meaning.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In addition to citing David Gies’s article on Gálvez in this essay, I must note his scholarly influence in this, and in all that I research and write. My sincere and deepest gratitude to him for his support and guidance in all stages of this (now older) woman’s academic and professional formation.

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